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"A 16th century MS.—the *Wanni Kāḍa-in Pota*—records the appointment of a Vaedda chief as Bandara Mudiyanse (a title applied only to high caste chiefs); at the king's orders (Bhuvanaika Bahu of Kotta) he fixed the boundaries of four districts or "Pattus" of the North-western Province. His name was Panikki Vaedda¹, he caught elephants and took some to the king, with another Vaedda chief, a Registrar or Secretary, called Liyana Vaedda. I have an early 17th century MS. which gives an account of part of a civil war in the Matale District, carried on by his nephew against the king who imprisoned Knox. Among the insurgent leaders were first, three Sinhalese chiefs of Matale, and after them are enumerated a number of Vaedda chiefs (including one woman) who are all expressly said to be Vaeddās; of the 'Vaedda wasagama'; one of them was the chief of Bibile²."

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Ceylon," *Trans. Ethnol. Soc.* 1863, Vol. 11, p. 313.) Within the last few months the matter has been rendered almost certain by the discovery by the late James Parsons to the N.E. of Ratnapura of quartz implements of the type figured in Plate VIII.

¹ The mention of the existence of a chief called Panikki Vadda is especially interesting since Panikkia Yaka reputed to be the spirit (*yaka*) of a long dead Vadda chief, who was especially skilled in hunting buffalo and elephant, is honoured among the Henebedda Veddās. This record shows that the memory of this "Vadda" chief has been maintained among the local peasant Sinhalese, who themselves are partly of Vadda descent, until it recently passed to the Henebedda Veddās. (Cf. Religion, Chapter vi.)

² The present day Sinhalese of the Vedirata say that such Vadda chiefs as those here recorded were called *wanniya* and repaired annually to Kandy with offerings of honey, wax, and venison for the king, who might also invite their presence on special occasions when they would attend, each *wanniya* bringing with him a ceremonial fanlike ornament (still used by the Sinhalese chiefs) called *awapata* (literally "fan"), with an ornament made of wood or ivory on the top called *awapattara*, or *āta*. Mr Bibile told us the following story of what happened on one occasion when the *wanniya* stayed near Kandy with one Galebandar who seems to have been a Vadda. The king instructed Galebandar to remove the *āta* from his guests' *awapata* without their knowledge. On the day of the audience these *āta* were missing, and as there was no time to get others the Vadda chiefs had to go before the king without them. The king questioned them: "Where are your *āta*? Lost!" and the king said "Henceforth only I will have the right to *āta* and you Vadda chiefs have no right to them." And the king called the Vadda chiefs *bandar*, each *wanniya* being given a name, e.g. Mahabandar, Hantanebandar, Talabandar, Kiritibandar, Rangotibandar, Rattebandar, Pebandar, Motubandar, Kapurubandar, and so forth, and henceforth the Veddās must needs go to Kandy yearly taking tribute to the king. And their people took their chiefs' names as community names, e.g. Danigala and Henebedda are Mahabander. It did not appear that *bandar* names of this sort were generally known to the Veddās, and we confess that we at present attach no importance to the story we

142 is rarely prominent. The lips, though well developed, are not tumid (except sometimes in the young); sometimes the mouth is rather flat. This when accompanied by moderately prominent cheek bones gives some faces an expression of considerable energy. The jaw is not prognathous, the nostrils are moderately broad, the root of the nose is depressed but never flattened to any considerable degree. The average of the nasal indices of 17 skulls gave the figure 52.7 (minimum 43.3, maximum 62.2, median 52.3), which is just short of the index (53) at which platyrrhiny is commonly assumed to begin. Nevertheless we believe that the Veddas may more fairly be classed as mesorrhine than platyrrhine, for certainly the impression made on us by the living was that they were not specially broad-nosed. The capacity of the 18 male skulls described by the Sarasins varies from 1012 to 1502 c.c. with an average of 1278 c.c.: none of the three female Vedda skulls from the inner Vedda district have a capacity of less than 1150 c.c., though there is a skull of an adult Vedda woman in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons with a capacity of only 960 c.c.

Summing up the physical characters to which we have briefly referred we may define the Veddas as a short, wavy-haired, dolichocephalic race, with moderately long faces and moderately broad noses. Expressing the results of measurements taken by the Sarasins we may say that chamaeprosopes and leptoprosopes occur in about equal numbers, and that the Veddas are mesorrhine or present a low grade of platyrrhiny.

114 The latest Vedda literature of any importance is a volume published by the Sarasins which records the work they did in Ceylon during 1907 when they established the existence of a stone age upon the island. This fact had not been realised before, though two naturalists, Mr E. E. Green and Mr J. Pole, both old residents, had already collected and recognised as artifacts the quartz implements which were the typical product of the stone age in Ceylon, and which, as pointed out by the Sarasins, are most reasonably to be attributed to the Veddas. A number of rock shelters were explored; these were situated at Kataragam in the south of the island where no Veddas now exist, and in other parts of Uva, in the present Vedda country.

172 [Ceylon, see p. xx. - Anal. 75]

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Not all the caves investigated yielded evidence of prehistoric habitation, but from a certain number were obtained quartz, chert and shell implements which put the matter beyond doubt and conclusively show that Ceylon formerly possessed a stone age. The greater part of the volume is taken up by an account of prehistoric quartz and chert artifacts, and the excellent reproductions given by the authors show that the quartz implements they discovered belong to the same type as those found by ourselves and described elsewhere¹. 114
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But in addition the Sarasins found hammer stones, a few pieces of worked bone, and a series of shells of the large land snail (*Helix phoenix*), the curve of each shell being occupied by a circular hole large enough to allow of its sharp edge being used as a cutting tool².

Plate VIII shows a number of typical Vedda implements. All are of quartz except No. 2 which is of chert. Nos. 1 and 3 are worked on one side only, the unworked side being shown in order to illustrate the well-marked bulb of percussion which distinguishes many of the specimens. The general characteristics of these implements are so well shown in the plate that a description in detail is not necessary. Attention may, however, be called to figures 6, 8 and 9; the first of these shows a large part of the outer surface of the quartz pebble from which it was made. No. 8 belongs to a type of which numerous examples occur among European stone implements, this specimen is thicker than is usual and measures 15 mm. from one surface to the other. No. 9 can scarcely have been intended for anything but an arrow head, two views are given of this remarkable implement which comes from a cave on the Scarborough Estate at Maskeliya, and for a drawing of which I am indebted to Mr Pole. No. 2 is of chert and was found in the same cave; two views of this implement are given. The localities from which the other specimens were collected were as follows: No. 1 was found by Mr Pole at Maskeliya, No. 3 we picked up at Bandarawela, No. 4 was collected by Mr Green 172
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¹ C. G. Seligmann, "Quartz Implements from Ceylon," *Man*, 1908, 63.

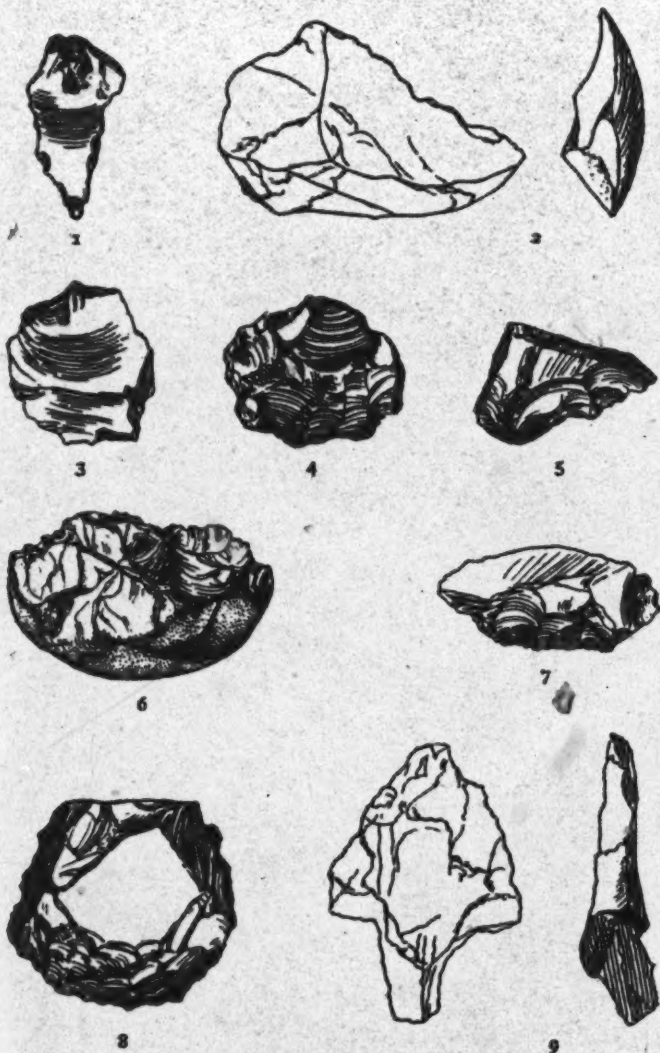
² These shells in fact constitute a primitive plane or spokeshave and resemble those found in Queensland and some parts of South America at the present day.

1: Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911

AX5 Vedda AX5

Plate VIII

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Quartz and chert implements

[Facing p. 20]

near Peradeniya, Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 are in Mr Pole's collection and were found by him near Maskeliya.

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324 The questions raised by the discovery of implements such as those figured are so many and interesting that no excuse is needed for considering some of the issues at length. The data are the caves excavated by the Sarasins in which prehistoric implements were found, and our own work in Ceylon including the partial excavation of the Bendiagolge caves which are described and figured in Chapter IV.

In the first place if we accept the suggestion that Veddas, the ancestors of those still existing, are responsible for these implements, their distribution will give valuable information as to the former extent of the Vedda country. It may be said at once that the distribution of these implements, as far as it is at present known, agrees with our historic knowledge of the extent of the Vedda domain, and adds to it the heights of Uva up to about 4000 feet (Bandarawela), the country around Kandy, and the hill country to the south (Gampola) and in the neighbourhood of Adam's Peak (Maskeliya)¹. And since they have been found in the neighbourhood of Matale they add an interesting confirmation to what Mr Parker has said on p. 9 concerning the former occurrence of Veddas in this part of the country. Within the last few months the range of these implements has been extended south to the neighbourhood of Ratnapura, where a number of excellent specimens were found by the late James Parsons, who wrote to us concerning them as follows: "I dug out a cave in Sabaragamuwa in a ravine to the north-east of Ratnapura which was most interesting. I have full notes of the cave—briefly it is sufficiently high above the stream for it to have been impossible for it to enter the cave in

¹ We consulted the late James Parsons, Director of the Mineral Survey, concerning the geological formation of the rounded grassy hills near Bandarawela called *patana*, upon which we had independently collected many quartz artifacts. He informed us that the capping of these hills usually consists of more or less disintegrated granular quartz rock, but that this did not seem to contain nearly enough clear quartz to produce the flakes even as a "survival of the fittest" in the process of disintegration. Parsons did however find several water-worn pebbles, all broken, but there were not enough to lead him to think they represented a capping gravel, although in the case of the Peradeniya locality there is no doubt that there is river gravel on the hill.

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geologically recent times. To a depth of 8 feet the cave is full of black earth containing many shells of the big tree snail mixed with the river shells, *bellan* (*Paludina ceylonica*), in such abundance that these shells are now occasionally collected and burnt for chunam. A shell is said to occur that is found only in the river at Ratnapura, but I did not succeed in finding it. The tradition is that the molluscs were used as food by 'an ancient Tamil people.' The shells are not calcined, but with them were a number of flakes of clear quartz—mostly made from pebbles, some of them the best I have seen and undoubtedly neolithic.... I do not think there can be any reasonable doubt about them. At a depth of five feet very rotten fragments of the top of a human skull and the region of the ear besides bits of long bones and some pieces of chert not obviously worked. At the entrance of the cave there is a sort of dyke thrown up, which is full of flakes some of which appear to be ground and polished."

Parsons' premature death renders it unlikely that a full account of this find will ever be published, but owing to the kindness of Mrs Parsons we have been able to examine a number of the implements excavated by her husband. These include a number of cores, worked flakes and scrapers, and one flake of chert showing a bulb of percussion, but none of the specimens that I have handled show any signs of polishing¹.

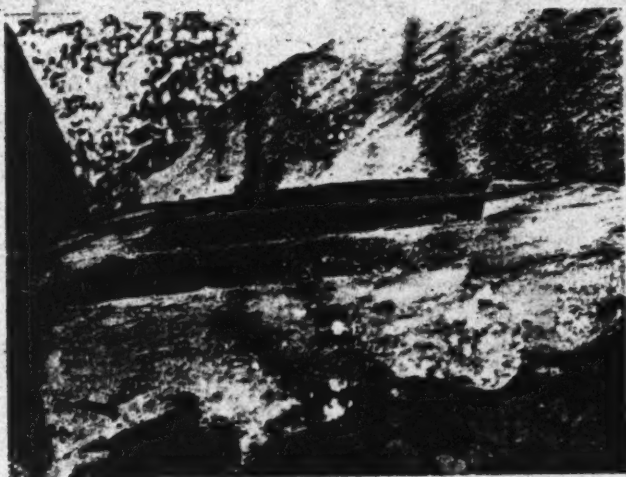
¹ Since the above was written we have received the following account of the cave from Mr W. D. Holland on whose property we understand the cave is situated. "The cave is situated about a mile from my bungalow on the N. bank of a small stream and some 10 to 15 feet above present water level. The cave has been formed by the weathering out of a soft core of rock from gneiss of the ordinary kind and may have been assisted by the action of the stream when running at a higher level. The cave is a fairly large one and would accommodate several families, say 15 or so individuals, and is quite dry inside. It appears to have been banked up in front, but this may have been caused by debris falling from the cliff above. The strike I believe coincides with the stream S.W. N.W. We dug a pit about 5 feet in diameter and about 7 or 8 feet deep, and came upon a lot of shells of the *bellan* or water snail and some bones: a much shattered portion of the latter we thought to be a portion of a human skull, and Mr Parsons subsequently informed me by letter that this had been confirmed in Colombo.... The quartz flakes were not found in the cave, but on the entrance bank where they had been exposed by the drip from the rock above washing the earth away and leaving them. The old inhabitants would naturally work at the entrance for the sake of light. I know only of this one cave in this neighbourhood. The stream flows S.W. to the Kaluganga (eventually), and

1: Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911

AX5 Vedda AX5

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Plate IX



Steps cut in the rock at Bendiyagalge

[facing p. 22]

● 172 With regard to the distribution in time of these implements, it seems that they are of respectable, but of no great antiquity. They are found abundantly on the surface of the open grassy *patanas* at Bandarawela and also on the surface of the soil near Kandy and scattered everywhere in the neighbourhood of Maskeliya over the ground planted with tea. Considering that Ceylon is a well vegetated country with an abundant rainfall, these facts do not point to any high antiquity even if it is allowed that in the tea country the cultivation of a century has lowered the level by 9 to 12 inches, the estimate given by planters whom we questioned.

The evidence from the caves seems to point in the same direction. The Bendiagalge caves present well marked drip ledges and many signs such as the steps (Plate IX) hewn in the rock, between the upper and lower caves, which show that they were used by the Sinhalese during the efflorescence of Buddhism before, or about the beginning of, the present era. This date is made perfectly certain by the occurrence in one of the caves, a few miles from Bendiagalge and used by the same Veddas, of a typical drip ledge associated with an inscription of which Mr H. C. P. Bell, archaeological commissioner, says, "The Brahmi [characters] are of the oldest type, therefore B.C." This inscription has been read by the same authority as,—" (cave of) the chief, son of the chief Vela." It is therefore clear that these caves were at one time—about 2000 years ago—inhabited

lies about 1½ miles (bee line) to the east in the range which forms the watershed of the Kaluganga and Wallawe rivers. The elevation is approximately 1900 feet and the cave faces S. (about). The Sinhalese have used this cave for a mine for the shells of the *delon*, which they burn into lime to eat with betel leaf. A large number of shells must have been removed but notwithstanding there must still be an enormous quantity left. We were also informed by the natives that there are two kinds of *delon* shells found in the cave, only one of which is found in the neighbouring streams, and the other must have been brought from some distance in the Ratnapura direction, 15 or 20 miles, and they inferred that these had been brought by whoever had lived in the cave, presumably for food. We also found some fragments of pottery (chatties) with the quartz flakes, which the Sinhalese said were of a thinner kind not made now; these however were no doubt left by Sinhalese gemmers or refugees at a later date, as caves in the jungle are still used by them if no houses are near. The rainfall of the district is heavy, about 200 inches. The cave would I think well repay a thorough exploration, but it should be undertaken by someone who has experience in such work and would be expensive."

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by Sinhalese who, as the results of excavation showed, had left behind them abundant evidence of their occupation of the cave. This will be clear from the following short account of our partial exploration of these caves. 172 ●

The nature of its bottom made the lower cave the easier to examine, accordingly a longitudinal trench about a foot wide was dug in the long axis of the lower cave. The first six inches yielded fragments of pottery and a number of bones, a much rusted catty, and an areca nut cutter, both of the pattern in common use. A good many fragments of charcoal were found in the upper 12 to 18 inches, and several pieces of iron slag—perhaps six in all—as well as a number of land shells lying in groups, were found at a depth of from 1 to 2 feet. Bones and fragments of pottery continued to occur until a depth of about 2 feet was reached. Massive rock, which was taken to be the bed rock of the cave, was reached at about 2½ feet, and within a few inches of this were found many fragments of quartz—some milky, some ice-clear, some faintly opalescent, some smoky and some amethystine. A few of these were as big as hens' eggs, the majority varied from the size of an apricot to a haricot bean, some were even smaller. From the large number of pieces of quartz—nearly 300—collected at the depth mentioned from this trench, and a small trench driven at right angles to it, as well as the absence of pieces of country rock, there can be no doubt that these pieces of quartz were brought to the site in which they were found by man. They were not water-worn, and the variety of colour and opacity they presented make it certain that they had not weathered out in situ, in spite of the fact that quartz (but not as far as we could determine ice-clear quartz) occurs in segregation masses in the gneissic rock of the neighbourhood. Further, when all the fragments were carefully washed and examined it was found that some three per cent. of the pieces of quartz obtained from this cave showed signs of working. Additional proof that the fragments of quartz had been brought by man to the site on which they were found were afforded by some irregular digging done in the upper cave formed by the same rock mass as the lower cave, and separated from it only by a few feet. The floor of this

● 172

cave was so rocky that a regular trench could not be dug, but a number of holes, the largest perhaps 6 feet by 4 feet, were dug down to what was apparently the country rock at the bottom of the cave. Fragments of pottery and the bones of animals were found in plenty in these holes, but altogether they yielded only four pieces of quartz, namely two water-worn pebbles and two broken pieces of clear glassy quartz. As in the lower cave a few small pieces of slag were found some 18 inches to 2 feet below the level of the surface. Most of the fragments of pottery found in both caves in the first 2 feet are decorated and are certainly not the remains of Vedda pots, and since fragments of iron slag are found associated with this pottery, the deposit in which it occurs must be regarded as formed not earlier than the Sinhalese occupation of the cave. As already stated massive rock was found six inches lower, and from these last few inches were obtained quartz implements and many unworked pieces of quartz. Clearly then the people responsible for these occupied the caves before the Sinhalese, but there is no obvious reason for holding that the makers of these implements antedated the Sinhalese by any long period. All that can be affirmed is that no pottery was found associated with the quartz fragments either by the Sarasins or by ourselves, but this is no sign of great age considering the extreme roughness of the pots made by the Veddas at the present day, and the fact that the art is believed, doubtless correctly, to have been adopted from the Sinhalese. One of us has already stated in *Man* his beliefs that these implements are neolithic and this is also the opinion of Mr Reginald Smith. Considering the refractory nature of the material, and allowing for the fact that it does not occur in large masses, the better formed implements must be regarded as neolithic in type, and in this connection it is significant that the bones found associated with the implements by the Sarasins are those of existing forms. These authors, however, believe that the implements they found are paleolithic, arguing that the absence of pottery and stone adze heads proves that they cannot be neolithic, though they apparently admit that in many respects the best implements approach neolithic forms.

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The mention of these stone implements naturally brings

323 In both communities it was said that men and women make pots, and of five pots bought at Bendiagalge at different times three were said to have been made by men and two by women. Further, it was agreed that pots had been made for a very long time and our informants at Sitala Wanniya said that they were made in their grandfather's grandfather's time, the longest period we ever heard a Vedda mention. A small pot, the upper right-hand pot of Plate LXII, made by Poromala of Bingoda, has a rough chevron pattern upon it; no importance or meaning was attached to this, which was avowedly copied from a pot obtained by barter. The thick open pot without a lip shown in the lower right-hand corner was made by Poromala (Walaha) who volunteered the information that the oldest pots were lipless. The large pot in the centre of the upper row was made by his wife. The pot to the left of this was made by Poromala (Walaha) and the pot underneath this by Randu Wanniya. It is worthy of note that though many fragments of wheel-made pottery were found in the upper layers of the floor of the Bendiagalge caves, no trace of pottery was found in the deepest layer associated with the quartz implements figured in Chapter I.

TOOLS AND WEAPONS.

411 The bow and arrow with the axe are the only iron tools used by the Veddas for the chase, for fighting, and for general domestic use. The iron arrow and axe heads are obtained by barter, as are the areca nut-cutters and strike-a-lights which most Veddas now possess. To a limited extent the areca nut-cutters are used as tools, for we have seen the final polishing and trimming of arrow shafts performed with these.

411 No spells are recited or other magic used when making axes or bows and arrows. At Henebedda the wood of the *kobbe* (322 *Allophylus cobbe*) is used for the bow; a sapling is peeled and shaved down until the desired amount of flexibility is obtained; it is then stained black. The bow string is made of the bast (283 a tree called *aralu* (*Terminalia chebula*), the same is used to bind that part of the shaft of the arrow pierced by the tang of the arrow head, the binding being afterwards covered with gum resin obtained from the timilai tree (*Diospyros embayopteris*). (314)

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houses of lasting character, as neither their instincts nor habits necessitated such procedure. 361

At Kumuna alone we find a modification of these conditions, in that the greater part of the land where the village stood is above flood level, and possessed of constant fresh water all the year round, besides being at a spot where there was a prospect of trade.

It should be added that all the many anicuts on this river between Kumuna and Kobilite bear silent testimony to the violence of the floods on the river, and to the once existence of a large population, that probably vanished as soon as these engineering works were destroyed—a population who could enjoy the benefit of the river's floodings by diverting the water into immense tanks, that now are but park-like pieces of jungle. 1720

The present inhabitants of the region embraced within the boundaries recorded here are unquestionably of mixed origin, as it is easy to trace on the western limits the pure Sinhalese type of feature, these fading again to a more specific type through the Maha Wedirata, and again changing markedly on the north-east of that country, till it is practically replaced by Tamils in the Panawa Pattu. Thus, it would seem that the Vedda type lay between the Uvan Sinhalese on the west and the Tamil on the east, with the result that frequently one would hear men, while asserting that they were pure Sinhalese, conversing with each other in Tamil. This I found to be actually the case at Bowola, where the villagers insisted that they were of the Goigama caste. 101 162

I was completely baffled in my attempts to secure a vocabulary of Vedda words, though I offered liberal payment for a few lessons in that language. I was pointed out men who were able to speak Vedda, and it was arranged that we should meet, in secret, at a definite time, and at a fixed spot, but when the time came I was told the man had gone away to find stray cattle, or some other equally trumped-up story. 197 198

One night I camped close to some huts in the village of Wattigama, and after my lamp had been put out and I was supposed to be asleep, I heard an animated discussion in the nearest hut, but though I could hear every word, I did not

of fruit, an insipid fibrous product being the usual type of Vedda-country orange. 137

In dry rocky ground *Ochna wightiana* is to be found in some abundance, as exemplifying the small order of the Ochnaceae.

Of the Burseraceae, I have already pointed out that *Balsamodendrum cordatum* may be taken as indicating some place of veneration. I found in many cases where there were ruins, or abandoned monastic caves, this plant would be sure to occur. On the summit of "Westminster Abbey" it is comparatively abundant, as also at Nuwaragala—another ancient fort. Doubtless the fragrant smell of the wood led to its use as an incense, and, thus, to its cultivation. *Canarium zeylanicum* occurs very sparingly west of Bowela, and *Filicium decipiens* may be found in the forest valleys, though it does not attain any striking proportions. [172] •

The Maliaceae is very well represented. The Margosa, however, as typical of this order, is an introduction, and where it is found under semi-wild conditions the inference is that that particular spot was once inhabited. This beautiful tree, however, is afflicted with a disease that kills back the young twigs, and I remarked that this sickness is very widespread. *Melinis dubia*, often called Wal-kohomba, occurs in the western part of the Vedda country, but in no great abundance. *Walsura picidialis* and *Dysoxylum binectariferum* are both common, while the famous Satinwood is, of course, very fairly abundant, except in what might be called wet forest. The abundance of Satinwood has, as I have hinted, doubtless from very early times been influenced by human operations, as the value and quality of this excellent wood is widely known. That being so, its spread has been materially governed, with the result that in a great deal of the country where it once must have been plentiful there are now only isolated examples.

Murronia pumila occurs in tolerable abundance round Bowela, Waragama, and Danakiria. It is medicinal.

Of Celastraceous plants, *Elaeodendron glaucum* is very common near the coast, and attains a large size. A *Kurrimia*, probably a variety of *K. zeylanica*, is found occasionally in the northern half of the country I explored, but does not appear to attract native attention.

LIVE ON THE BANKS

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away more frightened than you. A scratching noise under your pillow may lead to the discovery of a scorpion or a centipede. Beetles, moths, biting ants, and insects of all descriptions investigate and experiment with you. But you soon learn to ignore these little draw-backs and drowse to the lullaby of some wood-land songster.

Tropical Nature is a stern mistress; her favours are never unalloyed. For him who would seek her she holds grievances in store, grievances that enhance the very joy they encumber; toning down ecstasy lest it pall with surfeit; giving to the contemplation of foregone experience that unfettered pleasure the reality denies, prompting us in after years to say, forgetful of all the hardships, "those were happy days we had".

The Verugal where it joined the Mahaweli was at this season an insignificant stream. Quite a colony of tobacco growers flourished here. Very picturesque are these settlements or *thelhes* as they are called. Four to six huts stand some distance apart in clearings along the bank, most of them beautifully overspread with melon-creepers. Every hut has its vegetable garden; and standing before them, like sentinels, are the draw-wells, usually in couples, that feed the tobacco plots direct from the river. The lowing of cattle under the superb trees that stud the clearing, the crowing of cocks, the sound of human voices complete the atmosphere of rural domesticity in this wild land and furnish scenes which would rejoice the heart of a painter.

Putting up one evening in a coconut grove owned by a Moor we found an unkempt ill-clad fellow seated on his haunches staring at some simple wares a pedlar was displaying. They told us he was a Vedda from a village some miles away. Becoming restless under our scrutiny he walked off. I followed him to his miserable shelter, where I found his daughter, a puny girl of four, covered with ulcers. Edging up towards her father she stared at us distrustfully with the eyes of a startled doe. A few broken pots were their sole belongings. The bond of tender solicitude that united these human derelicts, of no consequence except to each other, was indeed a touching sight. I asked the man what he did for a living. He said he "earned a rupee for two months work". He knew neither his nor his daughter's age, and when pressed for an answer said irritably, "What do I know of age? Am I a man who knows anything about age?" Blessed mortal!

We gave him a coin which he at first refused, and only accepted with persuasion; he had evidently never handled one like it before, for he looked at it puzzled and suspicious; and when the amount it represented was explained to him he was not enlightened.

"He knows nothing," said the Moor vociferously. "Ask him to count six and see if he can. He's a real bull. What does he know? He's a Vedda. For thirty-six cents he will bring a kerosene-tinful of *bambara** honey, and," he added chuckling with subtle satisfaction, "he does not know what thirty-six cents is!"

The next day we saw in the distance the blue contours of Gunner's Quoin, the goal of our journey. The river had now become considerably shallower with broad stretches of its sandy bed exposed. As we punted along the shady border, we suddenly came upon a most realistic piece of ancient sculpture—the life-sized head of an elephant carved out of a

*Rock-bee, *Apis dorsata*

172 partially submerged rock. Occupying the position it did in an environment teeming with elephants it seemed designed to give a shock at first glance.

We were now in the precincts of an old civilisation. Polonnaruwa, its ruined capital, was barely ten miles away. We camped on a shoal by the water's edge. Purplish clouds retained awhile the languishing tints of a fast paling sky. Near us was an islet, forest-engloomed and haunted, they said, by tutelary demons. In bygone days these forests were peopled. All was now still save for the plaint of a sand-piper. A buffalo coming to drink stood irresolute awhile watching our fires, then melted into the gloom. A scarcely distinguishable flock of cormorants flew overhead. From afar came the eerie cry of a devil bird.

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cave was so rocky that a regular trench could not be dug, but a number of holes, the largest perhaps 6 feet by 4 feet, were dug down to what was apparently the country rock at the bottom of the cave. Fragments of pottery and the bones of animals were found in plenty in these holes, but altogether they yielded only four pieces of quartz, namely two water-worn pebbles and two broken pieces of clear glassy quartz. As in the lower cave a few small pieces of slag were found some 18 inches to 2 feet below the level of the surface. Most of the fragments of pottery found in both caves in the first 3 feet are decorated and are certainly not the remains of Vedda pots, and since fragments of iron slag are found associated with this pottery, the deposit in which it occurs must be regarded as formed not earlier than the Sinhalese occupation of the cave. As already stated massive rock was found six inches lower, and from these last few inches were obtained quartz implements and many unworked pieces of quartz. Clearly then the people responsible for these occupied the caves before the Sinhalese, but there is no obvious reason for holding that the makers of these implements antedated the Sinhalese by any long period. All that can be affirmed is that no pottery was found associated with the quartz fragments either by the Sarasins or by ourselves, but this is no sign of great age considering the extreme roughness of the pots made by the Veddas at the present day, and the fact that the art is believed, doubtless correctly, to have been adopted from the Sinhalese. One of us has already stated in *Man* his beliefs that these implements are neolithic and this is also the opinion of Mr Reginald Smith. Considering the refractory nature of the material, and allowing for the fact that it does not occur in large masses, the better formed implements must be regarded as neolithic in type, and in this connection it is significant that the bones found associated with the implements by the Sarasins are those of existing forms. These authors, however, believe that the implements they found are paleolithic, arguing that the absence of pottery and stone adze heads proves that they cannot be neolithic, though they apparently admit that in many respects the best implements approach neolithic forms.

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The mention of these stone implements naturally brings

30 and ear-rings and necklaces. Sober, wistful children ate raw melons or fragments of *kurrukhan* cake as hard as brick, plastered over with flies.

[262] Indian corn and *kurrukhan*, the staple food of these people, are prepared in a variety of ways. After soaking in water for twenty-four hours, they are reduced to flour, *kurrukhan* on grind-stones, maize with pestle and mortar, and eaten in one of three forms—*talapa*, *roti*, or *pithu* appetised with pungent sambols.

[263] Let us look into one of their homes. It is windowless and dark, except for the light that comes between the bark-slats in a hundred dazzling shafts. There are two rooms; the inner small and narrow, the outer a larger living room with a single doorway protected by a two foot fence—a provision for the children. At one corner is a hearth underlying a low [251] restle bridging the wall angle, for drying flesh; at another a cage-work [354] containing earthen pots and garish Allervale cups and plates. Hanging about the walls are rolled mats, oil bottles, baskets and clusters of sheathed corn cobs. Head-high is an open ceiling containing a jumble of things such as an old umbrella, wicker baskets, large earthen pots and gourds. On the floor is a large grind-stone, and littered about are shreds of mats, a deer skin or two, dirty cloths, a small pillow, a betel [352] bag, a rush broom and a polished plank—certainly the most primitive chair imaginable. There is also a coconut-scraper of curious design, [252] made of a serrated iron disc wedged into the outstanding limb of a triple-branched stem resting on its Y-shaped arms. Such are the appointments of a *chena* Vedda's domicile.

342 These communal dwellings stockaded against beast aggression in the heart of wild nature, the watch huts on the trees, the hallos all night, 351 proclaim the incessant struggle between man and the animals in whose strong kingdom he is only a small unit. But for its inalienable hardships 000 the life of this people makes a homely appeal to the human heart. Nature a capricious giver, bestows now abundantly now sparingly, and he who would wrest a living from her must have supple thews and great endurance.

172 Henanagalla was a place of antiquarian interest a few miles from Dolagalwella. On the summit of a large low rock in an undulating glade stood a broken dagaba completely obscured by a growth of big trees and scrub. Desultory worshippers had trussed up a slab for offerings of wild flowers. A low wall of hewn granite blocks surrounded the structure, and a half buried monolith or two peeped out of the ruin.

Descending from here and working round through a tangle of brush-wood, we came to a commodious cave quite forty paces long, showing the remains of enclosing and partitioning walls, a slotted stone for the support of a pillar and a large flat *paja* stone.

224 Besides these evidences of ancient occupation, were signs of more recent use. The cave was obviously a resort of monitor hunters. There 252 were the long sticks with which the savoury creatures had been poked out of deep lairs, and cooking frames where they had been roasted. The floor was littered with their dry heads, corn-cobs and nut-shells.

172 But more interesting than all this were the crude drawings that adorned the inner dome. Here was a veritable gallery of untutored art, wrought with finger for brush and a mixture of ash and water for paint. There were the most primitive representations imaginable of leopards, elephants

THE EMBRACE OF THE TREES

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with men astride them, bows fitted with tridentate arrows, and all manner of cabalistic signs. Many an interesting discovery awaits here the spade of the antiquary. 172

How different is the appeal of ruins buried in the remote forest, in the setting with which Time and Nature have invested them, from those set out in the trim nudity of archaeological display with tourist-ridden roads leading up to them.

Leaving Dolagalwella we turned up north, and soon entered the first of a series of great parklands we were now to traverse. These fine shooting grounds were probably centuries ago flourishing fields of paddy, fed by large artificial tanks, the crumbling embankments of which often outlie the glades. This is why, perhaps, the best game country in Ceylon to-day is to be found in the precincts of old kingdoms such as those of Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama. 000

We had put up for the night on a river bed many miles from the nearest settlement, when, to our surprise, a man armed with bow and arrows walked into camp. Approaching us without the least diffidence, he tapped us familiarly on the chest and looked us up and down appraisingly, speaking an incomprehensible jargon. Kombua, he happened to be, a Vedda of Dambana, a score of miles away. He affected ignorance of Sinhalese, and maintained the farce all the time he was with us; but if we wanted evidence that he was imposter in this, we had it the next morning when our cook accidentally dropped an ember on him: "This devil wants to burn me," he said in excellent Sinhalese, taken off his guard. A picturesque fellow was old Kombua, spare, sparse-bearded and beady-eyed. From his gaping ear-holes dangled loosely doubled strings of white beads. In a small bundle knotted round his waist was his baggage, and let into his waist-string was a small axe. He was alertness itself as he guided us the following day. His deep-set eyes took in everything. The flick of a leaf would petrify him on the instant, often with foot uplifted like a startled retriever; the faintest hum and he would search aloft, for honey is food to the Vedda. 609 [91] 142 301 412

The glades teemed with nesting green-pigeons. From many a low bough we started a bird, to discover its clutch of white eggs showing through the meagre nest. I was manoeuvring to add a couple of imperial pigeons to our menu, when of a sudden there was a flutter at my elbow and a jungle hen floated away into the cover of the bordering scrub. I had but to turn my head to discover her mottled eggs in a charred stump. The twigs and creepers about the nest gave it just that air of negligence that was its sole concealment. I debated with my companion as to the freshness of our find. "Oh, they contain young ones right enough; just feel how heavy they are," he said taking an egg in his hand with an air of expertness that disguised a tender heart. I had no pretensions to such skill, but knowing that a jungle hen lays some six to a dozen eggs and seeing that here were only three, decided to rob them, and justifiably as it turned out when we enjoyed them with bacon the following morning. 000

Coming to a stream we heard, closer than we had ever done before, the melodious mocking of that elusive cuckoo, *cuculus micropterus*. I asked Kombua to show it to me. "He cannot be seen," was the confident assertion of a Sinhalese. The Vedda awaited a repetition of the note, then peered into the dense foliage of a tall tree and in a trice was pointing 136 825

2. YAKKURE

*This be the verse you grave for me;
 Here he lies where belonged to be;
 Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
 And the hunter home from the hill.*

R. L. STEVENSON

THROUGH a lush meadow studded with fragrant wood-apple, we entered Kalukolu Eba a hamlet of some twenty huts nestling in the picturesque dishabille of a *chena* rank with maize, vegetables and chillies. Here as elsewhere in the Vanni there was much evidence of parangi (framboesia). Fully three-fourths of the people showed active or quiescent traces of the disease. A boy had a necklace of loathsome papules; a woman covered with nodes in practically every bone of her body was boiling a decoction of dry leaves as a salve; another was stewing monitor flesh in chilli-water.

The first sign of our nearness to Yakkure was a cattle-penstamped clean, where half a dozen boys were securing cows and yearlings for the night. Scratching around the stockade with the tameness of domestic fowls were a jungle cock and his dames, and from every side came the jerky cries of wild chanticleers. A cairn of tumbled stones marked the site of an old *vihara*. Blue in the distance, across a wide lagoon bordered with sedge, lotus and dead trees, stood the long rock called Gunner's Quoin, with a bare patch, high on its tree-mantled flank, pointed out to us as the Maraweethiya, a historic cave.

Yakkure itself was a negligently palisaded hamlet nestling in a grove of tamarinds, in full view of a beautiful tank. We were unfortunate in our choice of a camping place. Five days of seclusion in the forest had made us forget that the immediate proximity to a village always meant flies, smells, and embarrassing attentions from forward men and coy but curious women. There were other draw-backs too. At sunset, from a pool near by, came a low, ominous hum auguring ill for our night's rest. We lit fires, bestowed meticulous care on bed curtains, and bedaubed ourselves with mosquitoil. The lapwing's desolate cry, the doleful music of water fowl, the booming of great owls, the distant trumpeting of elephants, and more than all, the baffled mosquito murmur around, soon lulled me to sleep. But my companion who had failed to stop up betimes several holes in his curtain, the inside of which was found at dawn to be plastered with a blood-sodden host, tells a different story!

Three miles from Yakkure are the well-known falls of the Mahaweli. At flood-time their thunder is heard at the village. Once in a decade the waters creep up to and submerge the huts, sending the people up trees, and their cattle into the forest to be drowned or killed by leopards. With a *kapua* (priest) for guide, for the place is held eerie, we set out to visit the falls. Skirting an ancient aqueduct (*yoda ella*) which tapped the river a mile above the falls, we came to open jungle bordering the banks, that allowed us free passage through its colonnades of giant

133 timber. Such places are the favourite resort of sambur, of which on this morning we saw no less than six. From great tree-heights came the whirring of strong wings as gibbous-beaked hornbills took alarm. We were perhaps a half-mile from the falls when we first heard them like a pervasive hum of swarming bees. Soon we lost the noise; and turning to our guide for an explanation, learnt, inconsequently enough, that "the water does not cry after the morning; it cries loudest when the cock crows at dawn!" The sound swelled suddenly again as there opened before us, not the turbulent cascade we expected, but placid murmuring rapids that swirled in a wide sheet around and over a thousand sunnied boulders. Such were the falls as we saw them; but on occasion they could be a roaring power leaping over the granite to a wild cataract melody, surging widely to the outskirts of Yakkure itself, and bestrewing the jungle with great wrack that even now lay stranded high on forked tree-trunks. What wonder the place is held in awe and that men have a care how they journey to it, lest they be lost on the way or fall a prey to beast or demon.

172
T18 A smooth rock on the bank bore the frettings of ancient craft; the tutelary god's *devale* (temple) it was said to be. Here we were irreverently seated, while our guides sat apart whispering at the profanation. The surface of the rock was socketed presumably to hold strong stanchions which in the old days supported a bridge across the water; while small
[1782] oval pools, reputed to contain a mint of wealth from the accumulation of years of propitiatory and votive offerings, showed to our pagan vision nothing more than a few potato-like pebbles and sportive water beetles.

000 A few months before our visit, Yakkure was the setting of a gallant episode:—On the bund of the Polonnaruwa tank stands a shanty for forest-officers on circuit. Here one evening a wiry man of forty-five was amusing himself with his rifle. Placing a rupee against a tree fifty yards away he fired, holing it in the centre. He next made his targets a variety of live things that flecked the smooth surface of the tank, such as a cormorant or the barely visible head of a submerged crocodile. Every time his aim was true. The shots attracted a friend. "Testing your nerves as usual before an adventure?" he asked, walking up. "What is it this time? The Yakkure rogue* I'll bet."

"Yes, to-morrow I hope to get him," was the confident response. "You haven't seen *this* before, have you?" said the hunter handling his new rifle.

"You know best," said his friend; "but I should have brought a tried weapon if I were you, especially against such a beast as the Yakkure rogue is said to be. Only yesterday he smashed a boy to pulp. The villagers are too scared to leave their homes."

"This gun is all right. I've tested it. See," said he, indicating his hits, "I've been warned time and again against the use of light arms for elephants, but they have never failed me so far. Once, though," he continued thoughtfully "I had a near shave..... You know, I sometimes wonder whether the villagers appreciate what I do for them."

"They look on you as their greatest benefactor," replied his friend.

"It is good to know that," said the hunter. "For the last fifteen years, whenever I heard of a rogue in my province, I've gone after him; often at great trouble and expense."

*A dangerous elephant ostracised by the herd, and a menace to human life and property.

THE MARAWEETHIYA

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cries he had rushed in vain to the rescue. It speaks much for the dominance of man over animals that this puny fellow, armed only with a small hatchet, could live with impunity in such surroundings; and moreover leave his wife and children unprotected in their fragile leaf-hut while he was out in quest of food. [115] [412] [342]

"Cha," I heard Sinna ruminating sorrowfully to himself, "the gos-catching dog is gone." [231]

"Have you no other?" I asked.

"The one that's left isn't much good," he said. "With the bitch I lost I could catch six *goyas** a day." [227]

The way to the caves was up the heavily-wooded, boulder-encumbered side of the hill, plentiful with caves of bear, porcupine and wild cat. On the sandy floor of one dark den were the footprints of a bear and her cubs that had just vacated it. Sinna was well ahead of us, as we clambered on trembling knees regardless of all else but where to gain foot-hold, when a timorous one called out to the Vedda from below, "There now, if a bear should come, don't you run away and climb a tree." 13

The little chap wagged his head acquiescingly. I asked him what he would do in such an event.

"We will also strike; he will also bite," was the cool reply.

Gaining a spur, at length we attained the first of the series of caves known as the Maraweethiya. A strong aroma of bats greeted us. Ant-hills grew out of the dusty floor of the cave, the plastered dome of which was ornamented with frescoes of Buddhas and *devas*. A decayed wooden image stood behind a flat altar stone supported on bricks, many of which lay fallen about. A broken wall partially shut in the cave, and another divided it off from a deep pool of crystalline water. [172]

From here a passage protected by a low wall led through a narrow gulley flanked by small trees; thence by way of spurs, tunnels and deep grottoes we came to a shallow cave in full face of the sky, where we were the cause of much concern to a pair of peregrine falcons. They hovered above us crying perturbedly; now they would swoop boldly down almost within reach of our hands; now wing away with harsh cackling cries of alarm, as they discovered us handling their eggs, that lay amidst the debris of brick and tile.

Ahead was a fearsome pass, which we must negotiate to reach the last of the caves. It was no more than a shallow, sloping notch in the sheer side of the rock, overlooking a drop of about three hundred feet, and with seemingly nothing beyond it but eternity. On hands and knees we crawled through and were mightily relieved to find ourselves in the security of a large grotto. Here, before two patched stone images, we found a few of our carriers devoutly kneeling; on an altar-stone were their meagre oblations of ixora blooms they had gathered on the way. The virtue, it would seem, lay less in the quality of the offerings than in the attainment of this inhospitable shrine with its weathered and lonely gods. [578] [782]

We could go no farther; but hence along the crazy edge of the hill was the merest semblance of a break-neck way that led, we were told, to the ancient kingdom of the *rakshayas* (demons) with its foot-wide

*Monitor heard

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

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flesh which they tore out and ate. They were afraid only of the buffalo and the dog. The Veddas, not very long ago, are said to have herded the last of them into a cave and destroyed them. Brute or man, persistent rumour in jungle countries brings the *Nittawo* within the realm of the probable. 776

Entering the forest at Siyambala Anduwa, and working north, we strove to maintain a route as far removed as possible from civilisation represented by the coast road on the one hand, and the Badulla-Batticaloa road on the other. 000

Two miles within the jungle was the old path, now over-grown and abandoned, from Badulla to Pottuvil. It led hereabouts through a narrow pass guarded, it is said, a few generations ago by the Karande Hela Vedda who, having fenced it across, levied toll on travellers. Intercepting, as he did, a trade route from the interior to the coast, we may be certain he made a good thing of it, getting his share both of the *Aurrukhan*, maize, vegetables and fruit of the *Vanni*, as well as of the paddy, salt and dry fish of the Coast. 173

Kandanketiya, nine miles from Siyambala Anduwa, boasts an ancient temple of the era of Dutugemunu. We found it in the keeping of a doddering priest of eighty, who showed us round, all the while muttering "hu-hu, hu-hu," his only form of comment. His bed-room, dark, airless and dirty, was better adapted to mice and spiders than human beings. A great brass spittoon, emptied he told us once in two weeks, was the proudest thing there. A stupendous bo-tree, planted by himself, mocked with its vigour the withered frame of him who had tended it. Throwing open the doors of his little temple, without much ado he bade us enter the holy of holies, and pointed proudly to pictures of *devas* and harpies, half spurred-fowl half woman, who he confidently asserted lived in the Himalayas. Incidentally he indicated a money-box on the altar. But no sooner were our donations secure than his interest in us rapidly declined, reaching its climax when we told him we were going: "All right, go," he said, settling down comfortably on his bed. 172

A hornbill flying repeatedly to a large tree attracted our attention. Perching itself wood-pecker-wise on the trunk, it fed the occupant of a hole there with berries which it brought out of its crop one by one. We were told this was the male feeding the female he had deprived of feathers and shut up in the hole. We suggested there might be young. "Not so," said a woman; "where then are the feathers and droppings at the root of the tree?" Here was an opportunity to test the truth of gossip we had heard regarding the domestic amenities of hornbills. A man was sent up to the nest. Squeezing his hand through the narrow opening he produced an egg; then seized something by the beak, and unsuccessfully tried to pull it through. With an axe he enlarged the hole and soon handed down to us a veritable travesty of a bird. Scared out of her wits, voiceless, featherless, with half-opened beak, she flapped pathetic wings and tumbled ludicrously about in attempts to escape. She was obviously unfit for existence in the outer world and we returned her to her dark abode. Rumour was right, the male hornbill took no risks. 136

Bowala village lies at the northern end of Westminster Abbey. Buried as we were in the forest depths, we had not seen the hill since leaving the heights of Haputale. Suddenly the leviathan bulked over the trees. "There, that is why it is called Govinda Hela*," said our guide pointing 361 [103]

**Gon inde hela*—rock where the monitor lizard is.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

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ladders prepared for us beforehand, we made the laborious ascent; finally shinning up the interlacing roots of an obliging banyan tree that gripped a great hump of rock, we attained the summit of the northern bastion. Here we found the usual signs of old-world occupation: cisterns and seats cut out of the living rock, fragments of brick and pottery, and strong stone walls overrun with scrub and pineapple: [172] ●

The height was desolate but for wild cats, and songless but for the boom of wanderoo far below. A ceaseless drizzle blanketed in mist the superb view of forest and hill we commanded; but every now and then the mist lifted and showed the graceful contours of the ranges. There, crouching like a headless beast, its neck indrawn, was magnificent Wadinalaga; to the south was the long straight ridge of Moneragala; and close at hand were the twin domes named by the Veddā *Thanagoda* (breast mounds) and behind them *Thanakirigoda* (breast milk mound) with wracks of milky mist caressing their summits. [103]

On our descent we were better able to discern certain features of the rock the rain had so far hidden from us. Out of long horizontal fissures high on the perpendicular face of the hill, projected numerous sticks driven in for foot-hold by honey-gatherers; and dangling from the summit was a long cane that had once borne a daring fellow within reach of seemingly unassailable hives. Here we heard a marvellous tale: A Veddā of Bowala once saw a heap of wax that had accumulated on a ledge which an overhanging brow of rock made inaccessible. Nothing daunted, he armed himself with a torch and sambur-horn, descended by just such a cane as we now saw, and swung himself to and fro within reach of the wax, heating it with the torch each time he approached it. When he thought the mass sufficiently molten he stuck the horn deep into it and waited till it set. Then swinging himself once more towards it and seizing hold of the embedded horn, he leaped on to the ledge collected the wax, and swung off again. He did this year by year. On the last occasion, the horn not being sufficiently secure, the poor fellow was dashed to death among the trees and stones below. His wife who had witnessed the tragedy carried back word, "*Meena kalanghalangme popekorai*," which being onomatopoeic hardly requires rendering. 222 481

Our departure from Bowala was ceremonial. On the path stood a drummer, with two boyish figures disguised from head to foot in dry plantain leaves, that were plaited into tails behind. Their faces were hidden by speckled masks made from fragments of gourd-rind, with slits for eyes and mouth, and a blob of resin with fibres attached for nose and beard. Their bare feet and hands were the only indications that these scare-crows were in reality human beings. 535 302

The drummer struck; the dance began. The time twelve noon. The floor a root-ridden path bestrewn with elephant droppings and intercepted by beflowered streams. The walls, bordering forest trees festooned with great lianas on which parrots chattered. The dazzling sky above. For orchestra, the staccato rhythm of the drum, the jangling bells that studded the deerskin greaves of the dancers, the sound of a falling branch perhaps, or the short, sharp clamorous outburst of chirping cicalas. For a mile or more the performers led the way with a swaying two-step dance, hopping circularly on one leg to let us catch up did they outdistance us. At the next village the drummer wore the greaves, and [534]

1 [the hill called Westminster Abbey. - Analyst]